

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 04159 210833Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 IO-13 OMB-01 /090 W
-----005963 210901Z /20

P R 210722Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8877
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4159

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PEPR SY AG
SUBJ: BOUMEDIENE VISIT TO DAMASCUS

SUMMARY: BOUMEDIENE'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS FOR PRE-OAU
SUMMIT CONSULTATIONS WITH ASSAD WAS REFLECTION OF CLOSE RELATIONS
DEVELOPED BY THE TWO PRESIDENTS OUT OF THE SHAMBLES OF
THE STEADFASTNESS FRONT. THEIR AGENDA REPORTEDLY COVERED
THE WATERFRONT, BUT OF PARTICULAR CONCERN WAS THE PROBLEM
OF THE TWO YEMENS. AS A RESULT OF THEIR TALKS ASSAD
DISPATCHED FONMIN KHADDAM TO THE YEMENS TO TELL THEM TO BACK
OFF FROM CONFRONTATION. THE ARAB WORLD HAD ENOUGH DIVISIONS
WITHOUT ADDING CONFLICT BETWEEN THE YEMENS. IN ADDITION,
BOUMEDIENE MUST HAVE DISCUSSED THE WAY HE WOULD HANDLE SADAT
AT THE OAU SUMMIT. ALGIERS DENIES THERE WAS ANY MEETING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DAMASC 04159 210833Z

BETWEEN BOUMEDIENE AND SADAT, BUT WE WOULD BE SURPRISED
IF NO CONTACTS TOOK PLACE. ASSAD MAY LOOK TO BOUMEDIENE
TO PROVIDE A PATH TOWARD RECONCILIATION IF AND WHEN
SADAT RELINQUISHES HIS INITIATIVE. END SUMMARY.

1. OUT OF THE SHAMBLES OF THE STEADFASTNESS FRONT ONE
RELATIONSH HAS THRIVED, THAT OF PRESIDENTS BOUMEDIENE AND

ASSAD. THEY HAVE SHARED A COMMON APPROACH TO THE FRONT AND TO PRESIDENT SADAT'S INITIATIVE, ALWAYS KEEPING A DOOR OPEN FOR RECONCILIATION AND WORKING TOGETHER TO BLUNT REJECTIONIST DEMANDS FROM LIBYA, IRAQ, SOUTH YEMEN AND ELEMENTS OF THE PLO. MFA OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US THAT THE TWO MEN'S MUTUAL RESPECT FOR THE TRUST OF ONE ANOTHER HAS GROWN MARKEDLY. THUS, IT SHOULD NOT HAVE COME AS A SURPRISE THAT PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE WOULD WANT TO CONSULT WITH PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD BEFORE GOING ON TO THE OAU SUMMIT IN KHARTOUM.

2. PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE'S 24-HOUR STOPOVER IN DAMASCUS JULY 18 EN ROUTE TO KHARTOUM WAS DESCRIBED BY OFFICIAL SYRIAN STATEMENTS AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE TWO PRESIDENTS TO DISCUSS THE AGENDA OF THE OAU SUMMIT CONFERENCE, TO REVIEW THE SITUATION IN THE ARAB EAST (SHORTHAND FOR DISCUSSION OF THE SADAT INITIATIVE) AND THE MAGREB I.E., THE WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM, AND TO CONSIDER THE LEBANON SITUATION. THE STATEMENT CLAIMED THAT THE VIEWS OF THE TWO PRESIDENTS WERE IDENTICAL ON ALL ISSUES.

3. MFA EUROPEAN DIVISION DIRECTOR TOLD CHARGE THAT A MAJOR PROBLEM DISCUSSED BY THE TWO LEADERS WAS THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE YEMENS. AS A RESULT OF THESE DISCUSSIONS, PRESIDENT ASSAD DESPATCHED FONMIN KHADDAM TO THE YEMENS WITH THE MESSAGE THAT THE ARAB

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DAMASC 04159 210833Z

WOULD HAS ENOUGH DIVISIONS WITHOUT ADDITIONAL PERIPHERAL PROBLEMS BEING CREATED BY THE YEMENS. HIS MESSAGE TO BOTH SIDES WAS TO BACK OFF FROM CONFRONTATION AND RETURN TO NEGOTIATIONS. ASSAD HAS AVOIDED TAKING ANY OFFICIAL POSITION ON THE ARAB LEAGUE DECISION TO BOYCOTT PORY. NEVERTHELESS, MFA OFFICIALS CLAIM ASSAD FEELS THIS WAS A BAD DECISION WHICH ONLY ADDS NEW BARRIERS TO ARAB UNITY. HE WOULD LIKE TO REMOVE THE YEMENS PROBLEM FROM THE INTER-ARAB AGENDA WELL BEFORE "SADAT RELINQUISHES HIS INITIATIVE."

4. WE ASSUME THE TWO PRESIDENTS ALSO DISCUSSED HOW BOUMEDIEN WOULD RELATE TO SADAT AT THE OAU SUMMIT. ALGIERS HAS DENIED ISRAELI RADIO'S CLAIM THAT BOUMEDIENE MET WITH PRESIDENT SADAT DURING THE SUMMIT, BUT WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THERE WERE NOT SOME FORM OF CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE DELEGATIONS IN KHARTOUM, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF NUMERI'S OFFICIAL ARAB LEAGUE INTERMEDIARY ROLE.

5. WE HAVE LONG ASSUMED THAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD AGAIN PLAY THE PIVOTAL ROLE IN ANY RECONCILIATION BETWEEN

ASSAD AND SADAT WHEN THE APPROPRIATE TIME COMES.
HOWEVER, IT MAY BE THAT PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE IS IN A
BETTER POSITION AS FAR AS SYRIAN IS CONCERNED TO PAVE
THE WAY FOR RECONCILIATION. SADAT HAS EXEMPTED BOUMEDIENE
FROM THE BRUNT OF HIS IRE OVER THE STEADFASTNESS FRONT
AND ASSAD MAY WELL FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE
ALGERIAN PRESIDENT ACTING AS HIS SECOND THAN WITH
KING KHALID. SINCE THE SADAT INITIATIVE HAS A FEW
MORE ROUNDS TO GO, WE DOUBT THAT ASSAD IS IN ANY
HURRY TO EFFECT A RECONCILIATION. NEVERTHELESS,
ASSAD KNOWS FROM FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE THAT PRESIDENT
SADAT IS CAPABLE OF SURPRISES AND HE MAY WANT TO
POSITION HIMSELF WITH THE HELP OF BOUMEDIENE FOR ANYTHING
SADAT MIGHT DO.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 DAMASC 04159 210833Z

PELLETREAU

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS, SUMMIT MEETINGS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DAMASC04159
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780299-1247
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780735/aaaabcyk.tel
Line Count: 137
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7df3146f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1929800
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BOUMEDIENE VISIT TO DAMASCUS SUMMARY: BOUMEDIENE'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS FOR PRE-OAU SUMMIT CONSULTATIONS WITH ASSAD WAS REFLECTION OF
TAGS: PEPR, SY, AG, (BOUMEDIENE, HOUARI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7df3146f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014